

LUCKY

STAR



~ A NEW 'ZINE BY WITCH BABY • DEC. '98 ~



A witch baby rantifesto: FUCK Jaime Nabozny!  
Fuck Kelli Peterson! No one's awarding me millions or  
making a movie about me or interviewing me for People  
magazine for putting my queer ass on the line in  
high school. Fuck that! They can pick out two or three  
or even five of us and the rest of us still stay hideously  
invisible. Fuck that! I used to swallow my story  
because I didn't think it was typical enough. Fuck  
that! High school was hell: I was name-called,  
picked on, threatened, chased home, almost run over.  
Terror. Yet I was never actually beaten up — I  
never had black-eye proof of pain — so I thought  
I had to keep my witch baby mouth shut.  
Fuck that! I swallowed and swallowed until I exploded.  
Ran away to NYU in September 1995, still swallowing.  
Sophomore year realized I was terrified to go home  
for winter break. Started having flashbacks so vivid  
it was like high school all over again. Horrific nightmares.  
Exploded. September 1997 tried to die — OD'd on all  
the pills in the house. Spent weekends in psych wards in March &  
July. Fuck that! I'm sick of eating that poison.  
I'm sick of swallowing my words. So welcome to  
LUCKY STAR. Come on in. Because we've all got  
a story to tell... even if we're not telling it to fucking  
People magazine. ★ Love, WITCH BABY ★

12/98





I belong to a population  
considered by many to be  
expendable. I really ought  
to be dead right now.

Tough luck, assholes.







From my novel, Now You  
See Her, Chapter nine:

I love her because  
she listens to me. It  
is that simple. I like  
her soft skin, her strong  
arms, her shitkicker  
black boots. Her

brown eyes. We claim the Van Morrison song  
because we are both brown-eyed girls. But  
she isn't a girl, really. She is harder than  
that. She doesn't let me touch her. I  
am embarrassed by how little I protest, silenced  
under her tongue. I love her because she  
stops when I get scared. Because she looks  
like a little boy when she sleeps. But mostly  
because she listens to me.



I was hoping  
to have some  
Francesca Lia Block  
content in Wichy Star...  
and lucky me came  
across this article at  
my local bar, in the  
December 1998 issue of  
HX for Her, FLB  
birthed dear Witch Baby,  
my alter ego, in Weetzie  
Bat and Witch Baby's  
very own book, Witch  
Baby, Dangerous Angels  
(the collected Weetzie books)  
is in the cherished  
stack of books on my  
nighttable. Check  
them out!  
★

**F**RANCESCA LIA BLOCK'S stories have magical powers. They have helped adolescent girls to accept their lesbian sexuality, victims of sexual abuse to start healing and people who feel isolated and alone to remember the magic of being alive.

"I was writing a book about sexual abuse (*The Hanged Man*) and I got a letter from a girl [who had been sexually abused]. She had never told anyone except her boyfriend about the experience and she was writing me this letter telling me," Block says. "The fact that the book was published and it reached her is so wonderful."

When an 11-year-old girl read Block's writing, she wrote to tell her, "Your book made me know that it's okay to be gay."

These are only a few examples of the magic that makes Block a success.

While Block's books are aimed toward young adults, she never set out to address a particular age group. However, more and more adults are beginning

## Sharing

to count themselves as fans of her work. Her broad appeal is linked to that fact that people of all ages appreciate her emphasis on segments of our population that are often ignored—outcasts, kids with queer parents, gay teens, people who have been abused.

"In some ways I was surprised that [my first book] *Weetzie* was published as a young-adult book because of the sophisticated themes it deals with," says the Los Angeles native who started writing poetry almost as soon as she could put words onto paper and wrote her first novel in college.

But judging from her popularity, teenagers were craving, even needing, books that dealt with just such difficult subjects.

In each of Block's books, she manages to weave the magic of personal journeys into stories that provide to her readers the power of love and beauty.

In the *Weetzie Bat* books (there are





## the Magic

Novelist Francesca Lia Block brings us the tales of those who are usually ignored **by Daniel Paley Ellison**

now five in the series), she chronicles a group of extraordinary outcasts who live together in a magical cottage where music and love binds them together. While *Girl Goddess #9* tells nine stories of different girls—including one growing up with lesbian parents, with a surprising ending in a realization about gender—and how they make their way through their teenage years.

"I write about what I've experienced in my life and I write about it lovingly and with acceptance because love can heal—I've seen it work," Block says adamantly. "Miraculous situations happen from love."

Block has seen this firsthand. Her father was diagnosed with cancer when she was an adolescent, but she says he lived much longer than many

expected because of the love he received from his wife and family.

"I've also had a couple of friends who have been very ill and have responded amazingly to my loving care," Block says.

It was these events that gave Block a great sense of faith about the experience of love—and has fed her desire to help other people through sharing that sense of love that keeps her writing.

"Telling stories helps people come out of isolation," Block says. "I know that for me, the thing that has the most purpose is just telling my story, whatever it may be, and then hoping that it will actually help people."

If the young girls who write to her are any indication of the rest of her readers, we know Block is fulfilling her goals as well as the hopes of many others. •

# On The Turntable

- LUCY KAPLANSKY, "Flesh and Bone". (Red House Records, 1996)

Okay, not only is Lucy Kaplansky a trained therapist, and beautiful, but she has one of the most gorgeous voices I have, hands down, ever heard. This album (her second) is a bit hokey and country in places ("Don't Renege on Our Love") but the folk songs ("This Is Mine"; "Edges") leave me weak-kneed even after a million listens.

- THE NIELDS, "Play". (Rounder Records, 1998)

I look forward to summer folk festivals all year so I can dance to the Nields. Danceable, folksy, smart lyrics, a cute lead singer (Katryna, third from left, though Nerissa's rad too) - what more could one ask for in a band? "Georgia O." is a fab homage to my favorite artist ("I wanna be a woman like you"); "Snowman" speaks to freezing up rather than feeling pain ("And I must have a mind of snow to stand and watch you as to go and then turn to see this empty scene, and still not feel a thing"). Is it time for a festival yet?



The Nields



Also playing: Dar Williams, Lucy Kaplan sky, Richard Shindell, "Cry Cry Cry". (Razor and Tie, 1998)

Three of my favorite folksingers cover more of my favorite folksingers' songs, (including Greg Brown and The Nielsens). Truly flawless.

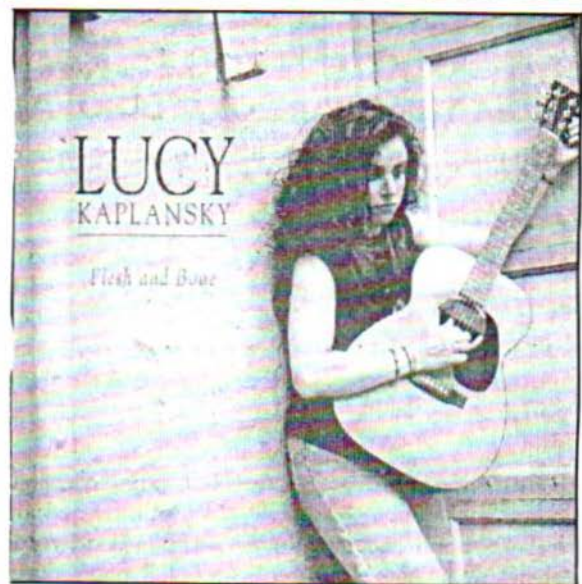
- Catie Curtis, "Catie Curtis" (Guardian 1997)

Poppy dyke folk.

"I Don't Cry Anymore", a song looking back on a teen queer love with a girl who's gone straight, is an incredible piece. "River Winding," about a dead mill town, is the anthem of my upstate New York hometown.

- Ani DiFranco, "DiCate". (Righteous Babe Records, 1996) Bitchy and sinister and honest and pissed and obsessed. Oh yeah.

- Anything by Greg Brown. He's my snotty, sexy, gruff, romantic, funny, wizened, childish, Zen Midwestern hero.





# MY STAR STORY

So those of us who eat the poison sometimes come up with think it was "other people" who did self-destructive shit: people do well in school, who didn't have friends. Wrong-o, sweetheart. long-sleeved shirts on the hottest days, me worrying that I'd was an addiction, replete with endorphins, like alcoholism. It's so fucking common. Some of the people I love and I wish I knew how I gave it up so I could tell one day and knew it wouldn't make me feel any the toilet and burst out crying. I was do without the old bad habits? But I Liberated. Like I was hearing the

lots of little habits to get the pain out. I used to who weren't ambitious, who didn't write novels, who didn't That was my hand holding the razorblade, me wearing slit too deep and end up in the emergency room this time. It Only there is no Cutters Anonymous. I don't know why not. respect most in the world cut their arms, their chests, their legs. them. All I know is I lifted the razor better. I flushed the terrified.

to my wrist blade down what do you also felt great. best lick on a fiddle, ever.

Like I had found the

light in myself again.

I got my star tattoo on my left wrist, where I'd done

most of the cutting, to show myself that Also to remember, forever, the course I still get Because that

my body did indeed belong to me. pain and my triumph over it. My permanent memento. Of tempted to cut sometimes, but less and less frequently as time passes. poison tastes like shit, and I'm not going to eat it anymore.

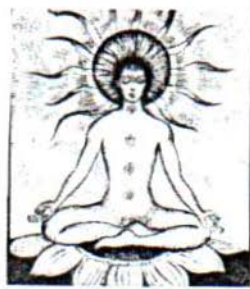
— Why is there so much shame around these stories? I'm wincing as I write this page. — ♡, WB





# SPIRITUAL

Perspective



Grace Paley.



Tracy Chapman



Toni Morrison



Joan Baez



Rita Dove

assorted goddesses



As I go searching for health, for a worthwhile life, for understanding, I am comforted by God, or the idea of God. The existence of religion assures me that I am not the only person wondering what we are doing here, on earth, alive; what happens after we and our loved ones die; why so many shitty things happen to people. Thinking about God also helps me feel grounded & connected. I thank him for meals, for each new day, for trees, for my loved ones. [I use "him" by default. God has no gender - doesn't fit into that narrow binary conception of things.] Thinking about God (whatever that means, really) is a way of reminding myself that I am alive, that I must be here for some reason, even if that reason is no reason. And that helps me to breathe.

I also get comfort from the Buddhist notions of mindfulness and yoga. Just more ways of reminding myself: I am here, slow down, breathe.

שמע ישראל יהוה אחד שמע ישראל יהוה אחד  
Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.

I had an ex who said that all things were present in God, and God was present in all things. The Lord is One and One is the Lord. Preachy, maybe, but it works for me.

— WB



Just Wondering:  
Can anybody  
tell me why I  
get so goofy  
over girls when  
I have PMS  
and my eggs  
are all dropping?  
It's not like  
I'm going to  
FERTILIZE  
anything!

-WB



# COME ON DOWN TO... BELCHER- TOWN?!



~ American Towns with Funny-Ass Names ~



## THE WINNERS:

- Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ
- Truth Or Consequences, NM
- Comfort, MO
- Lapel, IN
- Toast, NC
- Toad Suck, AK
- Soddy-Daisy, TN
- Smackover, AK
- Happy Camp, CA
- Cut Off, LA

## THIS IS A SEX-CRAZED COUNTRY:

- Intercourse, PA
- Licking, OH
- Mounds, IL
- French Lick, IN
- Beaver City, NE
- Vestal, NY
- Climax Springs, MO
- Wahoo, NE
- Honeypot Glen, CT
- Funkstown, MD

## THE RUNNERS-UP (Go Mo + MS!):

- Hot Coffee, MS
- Chunky, MS
- Alligator, MS
- Clever, MO
- Purdy, MO
- Novelty, MO
- Elmo, MO
- Competition, MO
- Experiment, GA
- Rocky Boy, MT

## THOSE BACK-ASS TOWNS:

- Butts County, GA
- Flushing, MI



~ This page is indebted to the fabulous Wake and her trusty Atlas!



## Clinton praises Hetrick-Martin for its efforts

President Bill Clinton wasn't at the Hetrick-Martin Institute's Emery Awards dinner on Monday, but that barely seemed to matter to the 250 people who turned out to support the gay youth group. The president's videotaped remarks were enough to bring many in the crowd to their feet.

The president praised Hetrick-Martin for providing "life-sustaining services to



"The president," actor Wilson Cruz noted with delight, "said my name."

thousands of gay and lesbian youth."

"You've reached out to these young men and women," the president said, "taught them how to protect themselves, counseled them, and changed their lives — and the lives of their loved ones — forever."

The president also praised Hetrick-Martin Executive Director Verna Eggleston and the award recipients for their work with the organization.

This was not the first time Clinton has addressed a gay organization; he spoke in person at a Human Right Campaign dinner last year and has dispatched videotaped speeches to gatherings of numerous other gay groups. But those who attended Monday's event said it is still significant that the president addressed the topic of gay youth.

"The fact that he even said the words 'gay and lesbian youth' was important," said Eggleston. "We still live in a society where people think that young people don't have sex, let alone have a sexual orientation. He's helping to change that."

Actor Wilson Cruz, best known for his portrayal of a gay teenager on the television program *My So-Called Life*, brought tears to the eyes of many in the crowd when he described growing up gay in Brooklyn.

"No one told me that I deserved to live, that I deserved to love and to be loved," said Cruz, his voice breaking. "When I had the opportunity to be that person for others, I had to take it."

Cruz said winning the award means a lot to him, but that the most "incredible" moment of the evening came early on.

"The president," Cruz noted, "said my name."

—MARK SULLIVAN

I'm not so hot on Mr. Bill,  
but this is pretty cool. I  
adore Wilson Cruz; watching  
his character, Ricky, on *MSL*,  
helped me through high school.  
Anyone know where to get old  
copies of the show? — WS



## WORDS FROM WITCH BABY ★

Word of the week: TRICHOTRILLOMANIA (n):  
The compulsion to pull out one's hair, self-destructively.  
Doesn't it sound like a tongue-twister? A complicated  
pasta dish? An Italian diva? I love it.

Book of the week: A Fragile Union by Joan Nestle (Cleis Press, 1998). Proof that one can marry art and politics. Beautiful writing; honest; aware; hot. My fem role model, Nestle is a writer, activist, and co-founder of the Lesbian Herstory Archives. "My writing grows out of desperate quandaries - both personal and national. How to love when I keep failing, how to be brave when I am so fearful, how to protest injustices when I am so tired, how to embrace difference when I do not even trust myself?" (10). Joan Nestle has advanced colon cancer - a fact which makes me cry. I've only met her a couple of times, briefly, and I love and admire her deeply.

Quote of the week: "I'm a ruby to someone somewhere, not a piece of coal." - Lucy Kaplansky, "Ruby"

## WRITE TO WITCH BABY!

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# 'TWO CANDLES':

A completely true genderqueer Brooklyn Hanukkah story

"Two slices of the plain pizza, please," a voice says behind me. The voice is calm, steady, genderless. I turn around. Your kind eyes smile at me from beneath your black ski hat.

"The mushroom's good, too. That's what I'm waiting for." My cheeks burn at the obvious line. "You have a beautiful voice," I say.

"A beautiful voice, huh?" You smile wryly. "I don't hear that very often."

"No?" We look into each other's eyes. "That's too bad."

My friend Wendy calls over from our table. "Get a plain slice for Gabe." The two-year-old babysitting charge is finally awake, strapped in his stroller.

"A plain slice, too," I say to the counterman.

You stand close behind me. Won't you lean in like a lover would, wrap your arms around my waist, tickle my neck with your breath?

"That kid's been asleep for hours," I say. "We took him to the candle lighting ceremony at Grand Army Plaza; there were crowds of people, music blaring from a loud-speaker, even freezing wind, and he just snoozed right through."

Your eyes brighten. "That sounds wonderful. All those people holding candles." You jam your hands in the pockets of your brown suede coat. You have skinny legs in blue jeans. Big boots.

"Oh no, it was--a Hanukkah thing. There was just one big menorah." I make a banner motion with my hands. "Two candles. I'm going back tomorrow, if--" I break off. I sound like a desperate proselytizer. (cont'd next page)









Who's the lucky star?

I'm the luckiest by far.

BTW, this 'zine was made entirely ~~without~~ a computer. It can be done.